

In the News

EXECUTIVE OFFICE OF THE MAYOR

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Message from the Mayor

As Mayor of the District, I've learned in recent years that few things are more important in our city than our need to improve the literacy rate among our residents. Literacy is like a seed. From it, great things grow. Improving our literacy rate can have a wide-ranging impact in our city.

During my second inaugural speech in 2003, I addressed the issue of functional illiteracy that is the reality for more than 35 percent of adults in the District of Columbia. This means that 35 percent of adults in our city are unable to locate an intersection on a street map or fill out an application for a Social Security card.

I believe that in order to truly create opportunity for all, and to connect DC residents with jobs, we as a city need to be serious about literacy. Last year, I introduced to our city 20 remarkable individuals who serve the residents of this city as Lifelong Learning Coaches. They remain hard at work, helping our city's residents learn new skills that can make them more productive and happier members of society.

On a similar note, I firmly believe in the value of great literature to help teach all of us new literary skills and to gain a deeper understanding of our culture. That's why on May 11, I helped lead a discussion as part of the DC We Read citywide book club at Coolidge High School in Northwest.

Coolidge is taking some innovative steps when it comes to literacy. Last fall, Coolidge implemented a school-wide initiative—the Coolidge High School Library Program—to improve the library. With improving teen literacy the primary goal of the program, students are reading more—and they're reading books that they like to read. They've been given opportunities to talk about books; and they've been given greater access to their school library and the local public library branch.

I'm also incredibly proud of the District of Columbia Public Library's continued efforts with DC We Read. Its primary objective is to inspire people to rediscover the joy of reading. It encourages people of all backgrounds, ages and educational levels to participate together in a single activity. The goal is to get people involved with one another while exercising their minds as they talk about and examine points that the book brings up. The experience of reading any book is enhanced by the opportunity to discuss it.

Literacy remains a priority of my administration—among young people and adults. As we move forward here in the District, programs like DC We Read, Lifetime Learning Coaches, and literacy efforts at schools like Coolidge are helping us move forward in exciting ways.



AGENCY WEBSITES

[Office of Tax and Revenue](#)

[Department of Parks and Recreation](#)

[Department of Employment Services](#)

[Metropolitan Police Department](#)

[Office of Boards and Commissions](#)

[Commission on the Arts and Humanities](#)

Welcome Home DC Troops

On April 27, I welcomed home troops from the DC National Guard who had been overseas fighting the war in Iraq for the past 18 months.

Soldiers from the DC National Guard's 547th Transportation Company were recognized with the "Freedom Salute." The 547th consists of about 152 soldiers, all returning from Iraq. An interactive concert honoring the troops followed the salute.

More than 250 "Capital Guardians" from the DC National Guard are still mobilized in Afghanistan, Cuba, and other areas around the world. Missions carried out by the 547th included mail runners, special operations, and daily security operations. The units that have already returned include the 104th Maintenance Division, the 148th Air Ambulance, and the 276th Military Police.

I was incredibly honored to say two words to the soldiers that they'd been wanting to hear for 18 months: Welcome home. It truly was an honor to be there with the most committed soldiers in the world and to stand with the men and women who wear the uniform of the United States of America.

All of them have demonstrated a special kind of service to our nation. They share a profound respect for each other and their country. As Mayor of the District, I hold them in the highest regard.

I firmly believe that all of our service men and women of the District of Columbia deserve full representation in the United States Congress. It is their birthright as American citizens, and that point is underscored by their devotion to this great country. As always, I pledge our support to the soldiers' families from District government agencies, including our Office of Veterans Affairs.



Community Profile

Pedro Lizama

When 13-year-old Pedro Lizama took a family trip to El Salvador, he noticed that many of the families there didn't have the material items that Americans have. Pedro decided to do something about it. The 8th grader from Jefferson Junior High collected clothing from his neighbors, family, and peers and delivered them to 35 families in El Salvador.

"Every time I go back [to El Salvador] there are things I want to do for them," Pedro said.

During the trip to his family's home country, Pedro asked his mother why El Salvadorians weren't dressed like him. He told her he wanted to collect and take them clothing, and she supported his idea. "My mom was a big support," Pedro said. "It was real cool."

Pedro said when he hand-delivered the clothing to families in his grandparents' neighborhood, they were all thankful. He said that they gave him back good feelings, so it was like an equal trade. Pedro was named as a 2004 state honoree for the Prudential Spirit of Community Award for his efforts.

A first generation American and native Washingtonian, Pedro lives in Ward 2 with his family, including an older sister and brother. Besides being an international service hero, Pedro likes to play football, soccer, and to skateboard. His favorite subjects in school are science and history. He proclaims himself a "toolhead" because he loves motorcycles.

Pedro is the November 2003 youth winner of the Mayor's Community Service Award, sponsored by Serve DC. If you would like to nominate a youth or adult for the monthly award, visit <http://serve.dc.gov> for nomination information or call (202) 727-9461.



Pedro Lizama



National Planning Conference Comes to DC

On April 25, I welcomed city planners from around the United States to Washington, DC for a meeting of the American Planning Association. The association promotes effective city planning to make cities healthy, well designed, equitable, sustainable, and economically viable. At the meeting we discussed city planning: past, present and future.

More than two centuries ago, Pierre L'Enfant designed a new federal city on the banks of the Potomac and Anacostia rivers. One century later, the McMillan Commission, led by great planners like Frederick Law Olmsted Jr. and Daniel Burnham, created the beautiful parks and public spaces we enjoy today—places like the National Mall and the Capitol grounds.

Now, we're restoring the great tradition of planning in Washington, DC. But we're doing it differently than in 1791 or in 1901. Until a few years ago, our plans were done for us—by the federal government. Now, we're charting our own course for the future: a future defined by Washingtonians.

Today, we're the fourth largest metropolitan region in the country. We have more than 7 million residents. Our region stretches 100 miles from end to end. It spans three states and the District of Columbia.

Here in the District we have unique planning challenges. We have the challenge of conducting planning without a voting member in Congress. And we have the challenge of bridging the employment, education, and income divides so all of our residents share in the opportunities our city offers.

So much has happened in recent years in our city. In the last four years, we've added 7,000 housing units and have 8,000 more under construction today. We've helped finance 12,000 affordable housing units. We've added 12 million square feet of office space and have another 6 million square feet under construction.

The changes in Washington today could not have been possible without good city planning. City planning is vitally important. I'm proud to say that I have rebuilt our city's planning agency and assembled one of the most capable planning departments in the country. Our Office of Planning has grown from a staff of 10 to a staff of 65. Now, we have the capacity to create great plans and programs.

Mayor's Congestion Task Force Convenes Inaugural Meeting

On May 6, I convened the first Mayor's Downtown Congestion Task Force at Judiciary Square in Northwest.

This important task force is composed of Councilmembers Carol Schwartz, Jack Evans, Harold Brazil, Sharon Ambrose and Jim Graham as well as members of the business community, Advisory Neighborhood Commissioners, business improvement districts and relevant city agencies. The task force will study creative and practical ways we can reduce traffic congestion in our city.

The District is growing in exciting new ways. One year ago we opened our new convention center, and we're redeveloping the former one. Soon Gallery Place, in the heart of Chinatown, will have nearly 200 units of housing, a 14-screen movie theater, dining, and retail.

As many of us know all too well, congestion is an unfortunate byproduct of our success. Congestion has costs for businesses, residents, and visitors. Congestion means time, frustration, and bad air quality. Now more than ever, we need to manage congestion before it hampers growth and development in the city.

Of course, we're not alone. Congestion affects major cities around the world. Their experience has shown that congestion can't be "fixed," but it can be improved.

I'm asking for help from citizens and the business and non-profit communities in creating a vision for how we can address traffic congestion in our city. We're focusing on the downtown area because it's the economic engine of our city—and it's growing by leaps and bounds every day.

The task force will meet as a whole once this summer and once in the fall. Five subcommittees will meet more frequently to discuss specific strategies in depth.



Mayor's Week in Review

Baseball Officials Meet with Mayor

On **May 6**, I joined other local officials in meeting with officials from Major League Baseball. We delivered our pitch to bring a baseball team to the District, and our hopes are very high that baseball will return to DC.

Mayor Delivers Remarks at Senior Day Citizens' Expo

On **May 6**, I delivered remarks at our city's 40th Annual Senior Citizens' Day and Health Expo, held at the DC Armory in Southeast.

Mayor Participates in DHS Reads

On **May 7**, I participated in our DC Department of Human Services *DHS Reads!* program, which promotes literacy.

Mayor Bikes to Work

On **May 7**, I participated in Bike to Work Day 2004 – which promotes biking to ease our city's traffic congestion and air pollution.

Mayor Attends Funeral for Chelsea Cromartie

I joined hundreds of mourners at the funeral for 8-year-old Chelsea Cromartie on **May 8**.

Mayor Participates in Global Family Day Planning Conference

On **May 10**, I participated at the Global Family Day Planning Conference at American University.

Mayor Helps Kick Off *Cover the Uninsured Week*

On **May 10**, I made remarks and helped to kick off the national *Cover the Uninsured Week* on Freedom Plaza.

Mayor Attends Meeting in Georgetown

On **May 10**, I attended a meeting of the Citizens Association of Georgetown.

Mayor Unveils Panda Sculptures

On **May 10**, I went to the National Zoo to launch Pandamania—our city's newest public art project.

Mayor Meets with Chinese Delegation

On **May 11**, I met with the Mayor of Beijing and we signed a Memorandum of Understanding to promote increased cooperation between our two cities.

Groundbreaking for Luke C. Moore Academy

On **May 11**, I participated in a groundbreaking for the Luke C. Moore Academy located at 1001 Monroe Street, NE.

DC Youth Advisory Council Meets

During the evening of **May 11**, I attended a meeting of the DC Youth Advisory Council.

District Activities



Mayor Williams unveils two of the many panda sculptures to be placed throughout the city this summer by DC Commission on the Arts and Humanities. The unveiling took place at the National Zoo on Monday, May 10.



On May 12, Mayor Williams traveled to Redskins Park to tape two public service announcements with Redskins coach Joe Gibbs promoting the District's Safe Passages Summer Program. The announcements are scheduled to run on DC cable channels with over 400 placements expected.



Community News

- [Mayor Issues Statement on Shooting of Chelsea Cromartie](#)
- [Fallen Officers Honored During National Police Week](#)
- [DC Fire/EMS Receives National Acclaim for Cardiac Care](#)

[View all News Releases](#)

Upcoming Events

5/11 to 5/15	Golden Olympics Various Locations For more information, call (202) 282-0753
5/15	Break Free Empowerment Workshops (Mental Health Month) 4103 Benning Road, NE 11 am – 2 pm
5/18	Youth Basketball Game (Mental Health Month) Kennedy Recreation Center 7th and P Streets, NW 4:30 pm – 7:30 pm
5/20	Awards Dinner and Ceremony (Mental Health Month) Washington Navy Yard 7th and P Streets, NW 5:30 pm – 7:30 pm
5/22	Ward 7 Walk-a-Thon Family Event (Mental Health Month) Deanwood Metro Center to the IDEA Public Charter School 1027 45th Street, NE 11 am – 3 pm
5/29	National World War II Memorial Dedication The Mall, at the end of reflecting pool 2 pm – 4 pm

